

Council 37 in New York City.

Guide to Pronunciation

Spanish spelling is an exact reflection of the pronunciation of the language. The pronunciation of each letter is subject to precise and consistent rules, and words are pronounced by adding together the sounds of each individual letter.

Vowels

The sounds of the vowels are clear and short. Pronounce the examples.

Letter	Pronounced like	Examples
a	the <i>a</i> in <i>father</i>	la casa, la tapa, Panamá, Canadá
e	two sounds: the <i>e</i> in <i>café</i> when final the <i>e</i> in <i>set</i> elsewhere	elefante, come, vive, verde, que pero, es, hotel
i	the <i>i</i> in <i>machine</i>	sí, cine, comida

o	two sounds: the <i>o</i> in <i>hope</i> the <i>o</i> in <i>for</i> if followed by r	oso, otro, hospital doctor, profesor
u	the <i>u</i> in <i>rule</i> written as ü when pronounced in güe and güi silent in gue and gui elsewhere	uno, tú, puro agüero, güira
y	Spanish i	guerra, guitarra y, soy, hay

Consonants

b/v	the <i>b</i> in <i>boat</i> when they occur at the beginning of a breath group, or following l , m , or n softer elsewhere, produced through slightly opened lips	baño, burro, embargo, alba, el vino, el voto, invierno, vamos Cuba, la boca, Havana, la vaca
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In Spanish, the *b* and *v* have the same sound. The sound of English *v* does not exist in Spanish.

c	the <i>c</i> in <i>cat</i> before a , o , u , or before a consonant	camisa, color, concreto
	the <i>s</i> in <i>sail</i> before e or i	centavo, cita, cinco
ch	the <i>ch</i> in <i>chum</i>	chocolate, chorizo

EASY SPANISH STEP-BY-STEP

Letter	Pronounced like	Examples
d	two sounds: the <i>d</i> in <i>dog</i> when it occurs at the beginning of a breath group, or following l or n the <i>th</i> in <i>other</i> elsewhere	donde, falda, conde boda, poder, verdad, nada, cada, estudio
f	English <i>f</i>	futuro, fila, oficina
g	the <i>g</i> in <i>game</i> before a , o , u , or before a consonant	gato, gusto, grande
	the <i>h</i> in <i>hat</i> before e or i	genio, generoso, gitano
h	silent	hombre, hasta, hablar
j	English <i>h</i> (It can also be given a slightly guttural sound.)	Juan, ojo, mujer
k	English <i>k</i>	kayak, kilómetro, kiwi
l	English <i>l</i> , but with the tip of the tongue touching the roof of the mouth	el, hotel, mil, palo
ll	the <i>y</i> in <i>beyond</i> , or in some countries, the <i>s</i> in <i>pleasure</i>	caballo, bello, llave
m	English <i>m</i>	menos, cama, marrón
n	English <i>n</i>	nota, nación, nariz

ñ	the <i>ny</i> in <i>canyon</i> or the <i>ni</i> in <i>onion</i>	mañana, España, señor
p	English <i>p</i> , but not explosive (without the puff of air in the English sound)	papel, persona, pobre
q	the <i>k</i> in <i>key</i> (found only in the combinations que and qui)	Quito, queso, equipo

r	the <i>dd</i> in <i>ladder</i> (a single tongue flap) The r at the beginning of a word or after l , n , or s is trilled like rr .	caro, barato, para, hablar rosa, el río, Enrique, las rosas
rr	a trill or tongue roll (There is no equivalent sound in English.)	perro, horrible, carro

Letter	Pronounced like	Examples
s	English <i>s</i>	sopa, sala, blusa
t	English <i>t</i> , but not explosive (with the tip of the tongue against the back of the upper front teeth)	torta, talento, tesoro
v	Spanish b (There is no <i>v</i> sound in Spanish.)	

w	The letter w exists in Spanish only in words of foreign origin and is not considered part of the Spanish alphabet.	
x	English <i>x</i>	experto, examen
y	Spanish ll (the <i>y</i> in <i>beyond</i> or, in some countries, the <i>s</i> in <i>pleasure</i>)	papaya, papagayo, ayer
z	the <i>s</i> in <i>sail</i>	azul, brazo, luz

Stress, Written Accentuation, and Spelling

Natural Stress

Words that end in a vowel (**a**, **e**, **i**, **o**, **u**) or the consonants **n** or **s** have their natural stress on the next to last syllable.

cucar <u>a</u> cha	volum <u>e</u> n
mañ <u>a</u> na	ex <u>a</u> men
tr <u>i</u> ste	tom <u>a</u> tes
h <u>a</u> blo	

Words that end in any consonant other than **n** or **s** have their natural stress on the final syllable.